



News Release



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Japan provides US\$ 3.8 million for medical and hospital equipment to support Zimbabwe's COVID-19 response

The Government of Japan has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Zimbabwe's healthcare system through its Economic and Social Development Plan. It will extend Grant Aid of approximately **US\$ 3.8 million** for the provision of medical and hospital equipment to support the country's response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Notes to formalise this assistance were signed and exchanged today between the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, the Honourable Professor Mthuli Ncube, and the Ambassador of Japan to Zimbabwe, H.E. Mr Toshiyuki Iwado.

The high-quality life-saving equipment provided to the Ministry of Health and Child Care will include items such as the latest Japanese-made digital X-ray systems, bedside monitors, defibrillators, electrocardiograms, blood gas analysers, laryngoscopes, and suction units, as well as hospital beds, emergency carts, autoclaves, wheelchairs and IV stands. It will be installed at 4 central and 8 provincial hospitals where the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is currently implementing the "Quality Improvement of Health Services through the 5S-Kaizen-TQM Approach" project to improve the quality of healthcare and hospital management.

This equipment complements additional medical and hospital equipment to be provided to Sally Mugabe Children's Hospital through Grant Aid of US\$ 2.7 million, signed in January this year. This equipment for Sally Mugabe Children's Hospital will include, among others, X-ray systems, bedside ICU and CCU monitors, an ultrasound scope, emergency ventilators, operation and examination equipment, as well as beds, cots, and operation and examination tables.

It is expected that these two grants for essential equipment will enable the recipient hospitals to have increased capacities to treat patients with COVID-19 as well as other conditions, thereby improving the healthcare system in Zimbabwe in the long term. The achievement of an improved healthcare system will contribute to Zimbabwe's National COVID-19 Response Plan, and realise Japan's pledge to promote Universal Health Coverage in Africa made at the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD7) last August.

Speaking at the signing, **the Hon. Prof M. Ncube** said that "The pandemic has placed unprecedented pressure on economic activities, as well as impacting negatively on the livelihoods of vulnerable people (women, youths, informal sector) in both urban and rural areas. The support from the Government of Japan will assist in assuring a healthy nation that can withstand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic." In his statement the Hon. Minister acknowledged the support from the Government of Japan. He further indicated that, on its part, the Government of Zimbabwe has come up with mitigatory interventions covering both prevention and support to productive sectors in order to save lives and livelihoods, as well as support of production in order to limit deeper damage to the economy, to which support amounting to ZWL\$4.5 billion has been availed towards capacity building of health staff (training); procurement of health and laboratory equipment including the consumables; procurement of personnel protective equipment (PPE); rehabilitation and construction of isolation units; drilling of boreholes by the District Development Fund (DDF); and production of PPE, especially face masks and sanitizers by local universities.

H.E. Mr Iwado said that "Through the new equipment, as well as the improved hospital management by means of the 5S-Kaizen-TQM project, I sincerely hope that the standard of health service delivery at the hospitals will be much higher for as many patients as possible and for many years to come. In this regard, it is essential for the equipment to be used and maintained with the utmost care, and I would like to strongly urge the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure this with the sound and effective functioning of the healthcare and medical systems."

Japan believes that for Zimbabwe to achieve further development in a sustainable manner, the strengthening of the health sector and the achievement of Universal Health Coverage is vitally important. For this reason, Japan remains committed to supporting the Government of Zimbabwe in improving the country's healthcare system.

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